Collectively, the Arizona Food Bank Network and its members provided emergency food assistance to 450,000 Arizonans a month last year. Food insecurity is a key contributor to diabetes and other diet-related illnesses. It also inhibits children’s ability to learn and thrive in school.

Friends of the Farm brings a consistent variety of Arizona Grown produce to families in need, which contributes to improved health. As a result of a similar farm-to-food-bank program in Kentucky, nearly 90 percent of surveyed clients reported eating healthier.*

Friends of the Farm consistently provides locally grown fresh food to Arizonans facing hunger, provides a reliable market for Arizona small farmers, and cultivates relationships in the local food system.

Friends of the Farm provides a reliable market for Arizona's small farmers.** This supports economic development in rural areas and expanded capacity for growers. Planned purchases from food banks contribute to farm stability and ease the marketing burden, which can take up to 40 percent of a small farmer's time. The program will lead to job creation and potentially new small-acreage farms.
Arizona Grown produce offers quality you can see, and taste! By purchasing locally grown fruits and vegetables, Friends of the Farm not only gets fresher food to families in need, it also contributes to a thriving local food system. Buying Arizona Grown produce has a multiplier effect on local economies and reduces the negative impact on the environment by reducing transportation, fuel, and packaging.

More than 1,000 registered growers operate in Arizona food bank service areas. Friends of the Farm purchases food directly from growers and co-ops and can include costs associated with harvesting and transportation. By working with farmers throughout Arizona, an increased variety of fresh produce is available to food bank clients year-round.

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Notes: *Fresh Produce Awareness and Consumption of Food Bank Patrons: A Case Study of the Farm-to-Food-Bank Program in Kentucky*, S.H. Yang. *Journal of Agriculture and Forestry* 63 (4): 195–203 (2014). **Friends of the Farm defines “small farmers” according to the USDA farm classification scale of annual gross cash farm income below $350,000 or 150 acres, taking both metrics into account on a case-by-case basis.

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